Dear Paul, 2/16/76

I'm not being a bad boy. It is only a few minutes after 10. But your call, as your kindnesses, linger with warmth. It is because you have been so good a friend that from time to time I may send you a carbon, to inform you. And, of course, if even indirectly there is a chance you may speak to someone who may be interested in considering being of help, it is unfair if not unethical not to let you know my status. As well as I know and can inform.

I did not know until you said it a short while ago that anxieties could cause phlebitis. I've had them for years without serious illness. But I want to assure you that Dr. Segal in New York inspired confidence, unlike my Washington doctor, and I did ask him about working, etc. Thus for the first time I learned I should not sit continuously. (It took three months to be told and then I had to ask what led to it!)

He confirmed that it is good for me to walk and to force myself. So, weather permitting, I take several walks a day. Depending on the day, meanigg the expectable calls and the way I feel, I often walk until I stagger. Yesterday, my second walk was 1,300 yards up the mountain and the same back, non-stop except for a moment when I turn around. I do remember automatically now and get up from the typewriter and walk a bit. The only times I say longer than 30 minutes today when when I waited an hour to get through to the local doctor after his receptionist answered and when the research director of Playboy phoned. I make a radio broadcast now and then and when I do, as the end of last week, I ask to be told when there will be a commercial so I can walk during that minute. Or, I'm trying to do what I should and not do what I should not.

I watch myself, thus the call to the doctor. There was a faint pink trace yesterday when I moved my bowels. My wife could see no bleeding and there was none. When it repeated today, I did check. There is nothing to worry about because there is no real bleeding and it is not intestinal or stomach. Probably a minor heroridal think I've never had before. But having been told I examine every time and thus knew. Or, I'm careful.

What would worry others is no sweat because of the years of adjusting and experiencing. I do not hide my concern over my condition and my dependence on those responsible. But constructive work has been a joy to me all my life. It is as essential as breathing. All the time I was in the hospital I worked, and my blood-pressure was usually that of a boy. If I had not worked I'd have had time to worry and would have had to talk myself out of it.

With all the other things, in two weeks and a couple of day's I've written not less than 75,000 words. It gives me a feeling of accimplishment and I think that today is partocularly good for me. I was not unaware of today's discomforts but they were sublimated because I kept going. Besides, just sitting around is bad medicine and for me the worst thing I can do.

Perhaps there is something else I should explain, the reasons for some of the letters. It has only two parts. One, there is no doubt that there was medical negligence at best and it is from those negligent that I can expect to meet the cost of any expensive treatment. Therefore, I make records. Earlier, when I had what was diagnosed as pneumonia and pleurisy in New York, late April, after I was better and had time to think I realized that nobody is as indestructible as I have always regarded myself. I have all these files. So, I made arrangements with younger people to see to it that what I want done is. These are good friends, one a lawyer, Lesar. However, they also have to know, Lesar more in the event something happens. He is as solid a person as you will ever know.

What you think are tensions in my life are not. Beginning some years ago, when people with whom I was xlose and worked with closesly and trusted turned out to have poor judgement or were otherwise unworthy of trust I began to separate myself from them. Now I have few close contacts with anyone described as a "critic." Not only does this reduce tensions and waste less time, as it does, but it was the beginning of an adjustment. There are other tensions about which I can do nothing but work is not one. The

only problem for it of which I am aware - and I realize there can be some of which I am not - would probably be worse without it. For example, tonight I'm wdie awake. So, I still have some of the sleeping pills prescribed in the hospital, they take about a half hour to work, and I'll take one. Until it works I'll have a pillow speaker connected to an old transistor radio that I'll tune to an all-news station and it will at least periodically take my attention. I keep it barely audible and if I awaken the same thing will happen. I am now so adjusted to staying in bed what is commonly considered the normal time that if I have to get up earlier it requires an alarm clock. Without it I stay abed until daylight and I go to bed between 10 and 11.

Because of your appreciated concern, let me ask you to look at it a different way. Can you imagine how much I'd feel like a caged animal or how useless if after all these years of work I discontinued it or reduced it to the point where it would be a frustration? I think it would be worse, as long as I go by the doctor's orders. I do.

Recent years have been of privation. I have reduced the number of people with whom I am in contact. To very few. So, I am that much more appreciative of kindnesses, like yours, and your thoughtfulness in calling.

There are things about me that few ubderstand. One example is that writing a letter like this can help me unwind. I feel no special tensions but I am wide awake. I think it is really because I feel like working more. But I stopped writing before supper except for a few additions totalling less than a page. I looked up what I need, wrote in each case from a sentence to a paragraph, added it to the completed chapter, but did not return to the chapter I started before supper. Instead I read what I want in my mind when I resume it. This is another way of saying that I work but don't push it. But perhaps I'm wide awake because there is the drive to work more when I feel like it. I don't know.

As my wife pointed out yesterday, this is harder for me because I've never been dangerously ill in my life. The few serious things I've had I've thrown easily. When I farmed I worked through mononeucleosis, not missing a day. I couldn't. I threw the pneumonia in days and the pleurisy in perhaps #10, then had to rebuild from the weakness of inactivity. And did. About 1935 I had jaundice, a form of malaria and dysentery all at once , 1,200 miles from home, made it homo and was never hospitalized. My only prior hospitalizations were for a childhood tonsilectomy and an eye operation about 1937. So, this is radically new to me. I'm trying to reassure you because of your concern. I think I'm adjusting and I know I'm not doing anything proscribed.

Now I'm going to bed. But I want you to know how much it means to have a man I've never met as helpful, as willing and as interested as you. It has real meaning, more now. It is the kind of thing that when there were no tangible rewards had more meaning. I'll close with a little story. I have to have a phlebitis identification. Rather than a bracelet I elected an addition to a thing chain I used to wear around my neck and I'm wearing it again. I got it first when a Catholic woman a thousand miles away used to hear me on radio talk shows. She sent me a St. Christopher to protect me when I travel. Ditto with how I got the St. Jude, to help me do the impossible. I don't remember the mezuzah's origin. But the Star of David is a story. Remind me to tell you that if as I hope some day I get out there. (A Vegas speech is being worked on.) Now with all these working for me and a few fine good firends....

best,